

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 459
By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the Board of Directors of the World War II Memorial Trust, Inc. for their vision and dedication in making Tennessee's World War II Memorial a reality.

WHEREAS, World War II has been described as "the most significant event of the twentieth century"; and

WHEREAS, Tennesseans who served in the U. S. armed forces during World War II are tremendously proud of the role they played in helping to preserve our nation's freedom; and

WHEREAS, 369,369 Tennesseans served in the military during World War II and contributed significantly to our victory; and

WHEREAS, Tennesseans were involved in every branch of the armed forces and every theater of the war; the scientific research and development of the atomic bomb in Oak Ridge led to the end of the war; and

WHEREAS, 5,731 Tennesseans made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives to protect and preserve the freedoms we enjoy today, which our progeny will hopefully continue to cherish for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, because there was no fitting memorial to World War II veterans in Tennessee, Governor Ned McWherter appointed the Board of Directors for the World War II Memorial Trust, Inc. to arrange for the design and construction of a World War II Memorial and to raise the necessary funds to accomplish this worthy goal; and

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WHEREAS, Governor Don Sundquist continued the appointments and vigorously supported the project; and

WHEREAS, each member of the Board of the Trust was a World War II veteran who served faithfully through the project's development, including the dedication of the Tennessee World War II Memorial on the Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park on Veterans' Day, November 11, 1997; and

WHEREAS, the Board of the Trust met regularly for three and one-half years, from the project's inception to its well-attended dedication, working assiduously to bring the memorial to fruition; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the hard work, acumen and devotion of the Board, this impressive memorial honors all Tennesseans who served, fought or died in World War II and teaches all Tennesseans, now and in the future, more about their heritage and U.S. history by raising their awareness of the places, people and the events of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Brigadier General Enoch Stephenson (USAF, Retired) has served with distinction as Chairman of the World War II Memorial Trust, Inc.; he served courageously as a fighter pilot during World War II and is a retired Nashville bank officer; and

WHEREAS, Harriet Howard (USNR, Retired) has served with great ability and dedication as Secretary-Treasurer of the Trust; she is state director of WAVES National, a female veterans organization, and an advocate for female veterans on issues relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs health care; and

WHEREAS, Hugh B. Mott (Major General, U.S. Army, Retired) has served astutely as The American Legion's representative to the board; he has previously served with distinction as The Adjutant General for Tennessee, Nashville's Chief of Police and City Treasurer and Post 5 Adjutant; and

WHEREAS, W.M. Wakefield (USN, Retired) has served with probity and proficiency as the Military Order of Purple Heart's (MOPH) representative on the Trust; he is a past State

Commander for MOPH and an active member of the Davidson County Veterans Coordinating Council, the United Tennessee Veterans Association and the USS WASP reunion association; and

WHEREAS, William H. Berkley, Jr., (USAF, Retired) has served an exemplary tenure as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) representative; he is a past State Commander of the VFW and is an active member of the Davidson County Veterans Coordinating Council, the United Tennessee Veterans Association and VFW Post 1291 and VFW District 6; and

WHEREAS, Archbishop William Francis Forbes (USAAF, Retired) served in an estimable manner as the Disabled American Veterans' (DAV) representative; he has faithfully served God and his fellow veterans as State Chaplain for the DAV and is an active member of DAV Chapter 3, The American Legion Post 5, the Davidson County Veterans Coordinating Council and the United Tennessee Veterans Association; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Trust's Advisory Committee also played an instrumental role in the successful saga of Tennessee's World War II Memorial; the advisory committee members are: Commissioner Fred Tucker of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs; John Furgess, Assistant Commissioner with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs; Richard Kinney and Brigadier General (Retired) Jerry Brophy of The Retired Officers Association; Mike Fitts, State Architect; Kem Hinton, architect for the Bicentennial Mall Capitol State Park; Beth Seigenthaler, president of the public relations firm of Seigenthaler and Associates, and Senator Douglas Henry; and

WHEREAS, located on the western edge of the Bicentennial Mall, the World War II Memorial is an outdoor rectangular plaza approximately 80 x 35 feet in size. A low wall encloses the north and south ends of the granite-clad plaza, creating a zone of intimacy to recall awesome events of the war, and establishing this place as a unique and separate destination within the 19-acre park-like environment of the Mall; and

WHEREAS, on the two longer sides of the Memorial, ten granite pylons rise to frame and partially enclose the outdoor space. On each pylon a large image is featured, each portraying important events of the war. The five panels on the east side depict scenes from conflicts in the Atlantic, Europe, and North Africa; likewise the five panels on the west side depict scenes from the Pacific Theater. Brief text below each image explains the image and provides educational content; and

WHEREAS, at the north end of the plaza, a large granite globe is located. The globe shows the world of wartime years, illustrating the various locations of the conflicts and battles. It also depicts the distance from Tennessee to those very distant places, creating a valuable geographic lesson. The globe is not static, but rotates on a thin cushion of water, resulting in a memorable presentation of the world, one which can be pushed and turned, even by a youngster; and

WHEREAS, other important elements about the war are engraved on the low granite seat walls at either end of the plaza. At the north end near the globe, branches of the military are recalled. Here also is recognition of the sponsors of this Memorial. At the south end, the names of Tennessee recipients of the Medal of Honor are engraved, appropriately honored at this prominent location; and

WHEREAS, the loss of life in this war was tremendous. To symbolize the 5,731 Tennesseans who made the ultimate sacrifice, the surface of the Memorial Plaza is paved with thick glass stars in their honor. This “carpet of stars,” a reminder of the touching Gold Star Mothers program, is a unique visual component, uniting the globe, pylons, and surrounding seat walls into a creation of a memorable place to honor all of Tennessee’s World War II Veterans; and

WHEREAS, a surface mounted granite disc explains the significance of the stars and covers a time capsule of memorabilia to be opened 100 years after the end of World War II during a ceremony on Veterans Day, 11 November 2045; and

WHEREAS, the beautiful World War II Memorial has quickly proven to be a popular attraction for the many tourist and visitors to the Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park; and

WHEREAS, the exemplary citizens who served Tennessee's World War II Memorial Trust, Inc. with the utmost dedication, professionalism and diligence should be recognized for their outstanding efforts to permanently commemorate the many contributions made by Tennesseans to our nation's victory in World War II; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That this General Assembly hereby offers our most heartfelt thanks and extends the collective gratitude of all Tennesseans to the members of the Board of Directors of the World War II Memorial Trust, Inc. for their diligent efforts and their singular vision in making our World War II Memorial an inspiring and beautiful monument in which all citizens can take great pride.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.